

Lieutenant Governor Garamendi Honors California Discovery Astronauts **Two California Astronauts Will Fly on August 25 Space Shuttle Discovery Mission**

SACRAMENTO – Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, chair of the California Commission for Economic Development, today issued the following statement prior to the scheduled August 25th launch of the Space Shuttle Discovery on its voyage from the Kennedy Space Center to the International Space Station.

“I am pleased to honor California’s leadership in the aerospace, space enterprise, and other science-related industries and very proud to commend the two Californians who will represent our great state on board Discovery: Commander Rick Sturckow and Mission Specialist Jose Hernandez,” said Garamendi. “Thousands of school children will witness these brave men visit a human home beyond our world, sowing the seeds of imagination and scientific curiosity. Their hard work and commitment to advancing research are an inspiration to all of us.”

Commander Sturckow, who will lead the seven member Discovery crew, earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo, and Mission Specialist Hernandez earned a B.S. in electrical engineering at the University of the Pacific, followed by an M.S. degree in electrical and computer engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

“With its record of innovation and the expertise of its workforce, California has made an indelible impact throughout the history of our nation’s illustrious space program,” added Garamendi, a University of California regent and California State University trustee. “As we celebrate California’s achievements, we should also recognize the vast importance of preparing our youth for careers in aerospace, technology and other scientific and engineering fields. The impressive career experiences of Commander Sturckow and Mission Specialist Hernandez serve as testament to the world-class higher education system in California and the great potential of its students. In a time of budget cuts and fee increases, I urge policy makers to consider our commitment to the next generation and to recognize that investment in our students today will benefit all of us in the future.”

The California Commission for Economic Development and its Aerospace Advisory Committee are dedicated to highlighting the importance of education for the future of the aerospace industry, which employs more than 250,000 Californians.

Space shuttle Discovery is scheduled to launch August 25 at 1:36 a.m. EDT and return September 6. For more information about the upcoming shuttle mission and to watch the launch live online, please visit www.nasa.gov.